



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: December 14, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: John Aslanian, Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Beth Benedikt, Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Tycho Nightingale, and Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Peter Fuller, Maryann Hondo, and Joseph Solomon.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law”. The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of November 9, 2022 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of November 9, 2022 were approved.

C. Update on Membership, and Thank you to Ray Jones.

Ray Jones is resigning his position on TAC. TAC Members thanked him for his work on various projects during his tenure.

D. Correspondence sent/received between October 7 and November 6, 2022.

1. "Safety Concerns in Dallin School Area," Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 07/20/22.

Discussed in Section 5.

2. "Right turners at Mass Ave and Pleasant," Email from Matt McGuyton, 11/08/22.

Email writer Matt McGuyton observed four drivers making a right turn on the red arrow at the intersection of Mass Ave and Pleasant St. Scott Smith commented that Petru Sofio had suggested the use of a through arrow instead of green ball. Notably, the Town installed through arrows at Lake St and the Minuteman Bikeway to discourage turns, and Cambridge uses through arrows at certain intersections such as Mass Ave/Cedar St and Beacon St/Dartmouth St. He suggested that the Town and TAC observe other communities for their actions.

Ray Jones added that Petru Sofio observed smaller NTOR signs at Mass Ave and Pleasant St. Consider making the signs more prominent.

Wayne Chouinard provided a written comment:

"These signals were designed and installed during the 2015 Arlington Center Project. The DPW monitors and evaluates conditions at intersections and adjusts as required for safety and to assist in clarity and understanding of signal operations.

"Since 2015 we have adjusted the location of and added Red "Right Turn Arrows". The commenter likely was in one location during the observations. It is not easy to view the signals for all approaches from one location and the commenter may not know how the signals operate and/or which approaches have green or red arrows from observation made at one location.

"A green ball is a suitable selection for the straight through traffic at this location considering the left and right turn approached still have a "Red" Turn Arrow.

"MUTCD Section 4D.04 contains the following language...which supports the continued use of the current Circular Green signal indicators

"Steady green signal indications shall have the following meanings:

"1. Vehicular traffic facing a CIRCULAR GREEN signal indication is permitted to proceed straight through or turn right or left or make a U-turn movement except as such movement is modified by lane-use signs, turn prohibition signs, lane markings, roadway design, separate turn signal indications, or other traffic control devices."

John Aslanian responded that he has observed right turn on red by many drivers at the intersection and did not think it was observer error. He also noted the proximity of the right arrow and bicycle signal might cause confusion.

Jeff Maxtutis said that drivers might not know they cannot turn on a red arrow. He added that the phasing at this intersection is not unique, but a bit uncommon which might be confusing to some drivers.

Jim Stubbe observed two green orbs for northbound Pleasant St despite having only a single thru lane. Jeff Maxtutis responded that the signal heads are needed for Mass Ave. The issue has been investigated, but it is not easy to place the signals.

Laura Swan concluded that TAC will follow up with DPW and return to this in a future meeting.

3. "Crosswalk at the Intersection of Highland Avenue and Haith Road," Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 11/08/22.

Discussed in Section 7.

4. "Traffic Concerns at Multiple Intersections," Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 11/21/22.

Email writer Ken Mattsson observed multiple intersections where sight lines obstruct the view of drivers turning onto busier roads: (1) Pond Ln turning onto Mass Ave; (2) Wellington St turning onto Pleasant St; and (3) Wyman St turning onto Warren St or crossing to Beacon St. Laura Swan said that restricting on-street parking near the intersections might provide additional sight distance; TAC will refer the matter to DPW.

Scott Smith commented that Warren St/Beacon St has a parking restriction, which is ignored frequently. TAC will request enforcement by APD.

5. "Concerns Re: Crosswalk at Park Ave and Oakland Ave," Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 11/22/22.

Discussed in Section 6.

6. "Request for crosswalks on Mystic..." Email from Nick Farnsworth to TAC 11/09/22.

Laura Swan will meet with the email writer to discuss the concerns. Mystic St is a bus route with few crosswalks, and it is included in Connect Arlington as a bike route, yet it does not have a bike lane. Melissa Laube noted that vehicle speeds are relatively high on Mystic St and expressed concern about adding a crosswalk without traffic signal. This section of Mystic St is 25 mph, but 35 mph further north.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

Joe Solomon informed TAC that MassDOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program will be providing 50 RRFB and speed feedback signs for school zones. Laura Swan responded that she will attend MassDOT's webinar and will be requesting DPCD submit an application.

Laura Swan added that MassDOT has adopted changes in school zone guidelines. High schools are now eligible for school zone restrictions (which were previously only for K – 8). Requirements have been loosened to permit school zones to-be placed in locations where a school entryway is not directly adjacent.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

- A. There was no update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).**
- B. There was no update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).**
- C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).**

4. Franklin St/Lewis Ave/Philips St

The intersection at Franklin St/Lewis Ave/Philips St is a wide, semi-confusing intersection, and it is scheduled for spring improvement. The goal is to reconfigure the intersection to have 90-degree turns with shorter crossing distances for pedestrians. DPW would like to invite abutters and residents to a TAC Meeting to comment on the plans.

5. New Business: Appleton St/Rhinecliffe St and Dow Ave/Rhinecliff St Crosswalk

Appleton St and Rhinecliffe St: DPW informed to install crosswalk signs. Wayne Chouinard said in a written comment to TAC:

"In my opinion the Town could do a better job vetting out issues before they are submitted to the Select Board. To reduce agenda items for the Select Board, some issues, items, and complaints can easily be evaluated by the Police and DPW to reduce the burden on the Select Board.

"I suggest we develop a procedure for when items are submitted directly to the Select Board that Office Staff send the comment for review prior to sending to the Select Board. In this scenario we may be able to develop a solution and avoid the Select Board.

"Currently, when the Engineering Division receives requests and/or concerns we review the issues/items and prepare comments and propose improvements if applicable. These are forwarded to the Police Department Traffic Unit and DPW Operation's Manager (I call this the unofficial Safety Committee) for additional input before responding back to the resident. If the resident does not agree with the determination they can then forward their concerns to the Select Board. This provides the opportunity for Town Staff to respond without the need for Select Board from the initial receipt of concerns or requests.

"I suggest that we refine this process slightly to add Ashley at the Select Board (when submitted directly to the Select Board) and the TAC Chair to be included in the review and discussion process. I am in the process of developing an on-line spreadsheet to keep track of items submitted. By email we can communicate to discuss the item and mutually develop a response. We will then send the consensus response to the resident. If the resident decides to further the issue to the Select Board, it will now have comments from Town Departments as additional information to review.

"These are simple issues that could have easily been evaluated by DPW and Police."

Len Diggins responded that this is fine if there is good communication and the Select Board can track see what is happening.

Scott Smith commented that there have been planning differences among DPW, APD, and DPCD (e.g., Chestnut St, Summer St crosswalk). DPW and APD might not be aligned with the direction of TAC and the Town.

Jeff Maxtutis agreed that residents need to-be part of the communication, and TAC does a good job reaching out to residents. APD and DPW would need the Select Board in cases that require its regulatory authority.

Laura Swan concluded that there is concern on transparency and that communication with residents is an important consideration.

Dow Ave/Rhinecliff St Crosswalk: This concerns northbound vehicles on Rhinecliffe St making a right turn onto Dow Ave. Presently, tree branches from a tree on private property block a crosswalk sign and make it difficult to see faded crosswalk paint. A utility pole on the corner also impairs visibility. This crossing is near Dallin School, and there is a lot of vehicle traffic during commute times.

Laura Swan recommends we consider quick and easy measures to increase visibility such as tree trimming and crosswalk paint. Wayne Chouinard had recommended "a review of crash data to determine if there have been any incidents to corroborate the resident's concerns".

Jeff Maxtutis and Melissa Laube volunteered to form a Working Group.

6. New Business: Park Ave Corridor, Crosswalk at Oakland Ave

Precinct 16 had a meeting about the crosswalk at Oakland Ave/Park Ave. This section of Park Ave has a speed limit of 35 mph. Laura Swan discussed the existing conditions, noting that crossing feels unsafe especially with vehicles

moving downhill. She offered the following short-term measures: increase the visibility of the crosswalk signs by making them double-sided with retroreflective post covers, which seems to-be a standard among recent installations in the Town.

Maryann Hondo, who lives on Oakland Ave, noted that there are many Ottoson Middle School students who use the crosswalk. There have been two crashes at the intersection recently, and vehicles regularly speed on Park Ave and Oakland Ave. She concluded that crosswalk signs are not enough to enhance safety and traffic signals are needed.

Joe Solomon added that neighbors near Park Ave regularly discuss the danger of crossing Park Ave and many students walk or bike to school crossing Park Ave. He said that the recent designs for Chestnut St and Mass Ave/Appleton St should be Town standards. In addition to the short-term recommendations, he recommended that a pedestrian-crossing bollard be placed on the double-yellow line to signify the crosswalk, and bump outs be constructed.

Jeff Maxtutis said that TAC suggested adding the crosswalk at Oakland Ave/Park Ave many years ago. He concurred with the short-term recommendations and that more needs to-be done, such as a flashing beacon and speed feedback signs. Shoji Takahashi noted that Rt 60 in Medford has many crosswalk enhancements that TAC can investigate and consider.

Len Diggins offered his support to Maryann Hondo and Joe Solomon. He also agreed about doing many interventions and asked what the lowest speed limit could be for Park Ave and how to change it. Jeff Maxtutis responded that MassDOT is responsible for speed limits except for the Town-wide 25 mph limit for density. Changing the speed limit would require a speed study based on the 85th percentile.

Jeff Maxtutis said that the Complete Streets prioritization plan is set to-be updated, and Park Ave and Appleton St should be on the priority list to make it eligible for MassDOT funding. TAC will follow up with DPCD to add this intersection to list. Wayne Chouinard's written comments to TAC said "These issues should be incorporated into the larger Park Ave study including Park Ave at Paul Revere, Appleton, Oakland and Florence and in addition to evaluating the Traffic Signal at Park Ave. & Appleton Street, it should include a more comprehensive traffic calming approach for the entire corridor."

A Working Group was formed and Jeff Maxtutis, Maryann Hondo, and Joe Solomon volunteered to join it.

7. New Business: Crosswalk at Highland Avenue and High Haith Road

Many neighbors signed a petition to the Select Board regarding vehicles not stopping reliably enough at the crosswalk at Highland Ave/High Haith Rd creating

a dangerous situation. Laura Swan noted the existing conditions of pedestrian flags, yield line before crosswalk, and bollard in the middle of road. She added that a short-term solution could include enhancing pedestrian crossing signs by making them double-sided and adding retroreflective sign posts.

Melissa Laube was a member of the 2014 Working Group that studied this crossing, which added the bollard sign and restriped the crosswalk. Notably, sight distance is an issue because of the roadway grade, and Corey Rateau and Wayne Chouinard considered it an unsafe crosswalk due to the roadway grade. Speed studies were performed at the time; vehicles were not moving particularly fast.

Consider adding speed feedback sign and flashing beacon. Residents suggested speed hump. Consider moving crosswalk to Ottawa Rd, but that location is not as convenient for pedestrians.

In Wayne Chouinard's written comments, he proposed "duplicative signs on each assembly to increase the visibility for on-coming drivers."

TAC will communicate with DPW to add the signs and retroreflective posts to see if the situation is improved.

8. Discussion: Summer St/ Victoria Rd

Jim Stubbe presented a draft Memo on short-term recommendations for the crosswalk at Summer St and Victoria Rd. In brief, pedestrians have difficulty seeing vehicles and drivers have difficulty seeing pedestrians. In the short-term: install RRFB and advance warning beacon to enhance visibility of pedestrians to drivers; trim tree branches; paint advance yield lines; expand no parking zones and add flex posts/bollards to daylight crosswalk; install pedestrian flags.

He added that street lighting has been enhanced already by DPW. Also, there are no speed limit signs nearby (25 mph at this location per DPW).

Jeff Maxtutis endorsed the short-term recommendations. He noted that the Select Board will be sensitive to the loss of parking spaces. Flex posts will be removed in winter, but that is less of an issue as the fields are not used at that time. RRFB cost will be an issue, but it will be good for the project and safety. This is the third time this crossing has been brought to TAC. It would be helpful to have a reaction from DPW and APD before voting on it.

9. Update: Mt Gilboa Traffic Calming

Ray Jones said there was one open question on stop compliance at Westmoreland Ave and Westminster Ave. Shoji Takahashi will conduct stop compliance observations in the spring.

10. Update: Downing Square Signage

Melissa Laube identified MUTCD sign W4-4P “Traffic does not stop”, which might be useful. Scott Smith noted that a similar sign is at Waldo Rd/Marathon St. He also suggested signage about the layout of intersection; an example of which is Davis Square. Jeff Maxtutis added that it is challenging to provide a short and clear sign for Downing Square.

11. Update: Gibbs School/ Rawson Rd

John Aslanian presented his observations and suggestions for improvements to the Broadway/Rawson Rd intersection. Notably, Gibbs School is nearby, and Fenway Market, and other stores, are frequented and adjacent to the intersection. There is no crosswalk across Rawson Rd (on the northside of Broadway) to Fenway Market. Broadway drivers cannot see Rawson Rd; Rawson drivers cannot see Broadway at the stop bar.

Scott Smith concurred that the challenge is due to the visibility at this intersection. He suggested the potential for curb changes to make the intersection more pedestrian friendly. He added that the stop bar cannot be moved closer to Broadway as there is a 4' minimum between stop bar and crosswalk.

John Aslanian and Scott Smith will merge their observations and reports for a recommendation to TAC.

12. Update: Eastern Ave

The Working Group conducted a site visit walk and observed flashing beacons near Brackett School were not flashing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.